


MEMORANDUM

October 25, 2011

TO: Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Parent Resource Center Fees**

The Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee will discuss whether operating budget support to the Parent Resource Centers should take into account fees collected by the program. The following individuals are expected to participate in the discussion:

Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
Kate Garvey, Chief, Children, Youth and Families
Beryl Feinberg, Office of Management and Budget

Background

Parent Resource Centers (PRCs) offer preschool support for children and their caregivers on a drop in basis. The centers offer information, support and resources that help families serve as nurturers, teachers and role models for their children and connect with other families. They also provide information about child development and developmentally appropriate activities that enhance the learning of young children and promote school readiness. A more detailed description of services is included at ©1.

The Council has received correspondence (©2-4) expressing support for the continued operation of Parent Resource Centers. The correspondence expressed concern that the use of registration fees generated by the program did not support services offered by the centers. The correspondence also advocated for a process that allows the program to collect donations to support services.

FY12 Operating Budget and Services Update

Responsibility for the PRCs currently rests with DHHS, and the centers are operated through a contract with Family Services, Inc. The program's FY12 operating budget included \$48,120 in County general fund dollars, which was level with the FY11 County general fund allocation to the program. In FY11, however, the program was also supported with \$43,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding from the Infants and Toddlers program and additional County General Fund support of \$12,252 through DHHS Early Childhood Services. Because these amounts are not available in FY12, services have been reduced.

The following chart shows the reduction in sites and hours from FY12 levels; DHHS reports that services to families has remained consistent:

PRC Location	Address	FY11	FY12	Net Hour Diff
Emory Grove Family Resource Center	8107 Morningview Dr., Gaithersburg	T, W, Th 10 am-2:30 pm	T, W, Th 10 am-1:30 pm	-3
Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center	2450 Lyttons ville Rd., Silver Spring	T, W, F 10 am-2:30 pm	T, W, Th 10 am-1:30 pm	-3
Children's Resource Center	332 West Edmonston Dr., Rockville	T, TH, F 10 am-2:30 pm	T, W, Th 10 am-1:30 pm	-3
Millian Memorial United Methodist Church*	13016 Parkland Drive Rockville.	T, W, Th 10 am-2:30 pm	Closed	-13.5

In addition to the reduction in site and hours, the level of supervision and administrative support for the centers has also been reduced. Council staff notes that DHHS has minimized the closing of centers and the hours reductions at existing sites; during FY12 operating budget discussions, the Department indicated that available funding would only support operations at one site. **The Committee may be interested in understanding the impact that reductions in supervision and administrative support are having on services delivered at the centers.**

The Department reports that it has submitted a grant request to the Maryland State Department of Education that could potentially provide additional training and increase hours through a partnership with the Infants and Toddlers program. **The Committee may be interested in hearing about the likelihood of receiving these funds, the total amount of the grant request, and what the additional funding would provide in terms of hours and services.**

The Committee may also be interested in hearing whether the Department has explored a mechanism by which the program can accept donations to support program operations as recommended by PRC advocates.

Parent Resource Center Fees

Responsibility for the program was transferred from the Housing Opportunities Commission to DHHS for FY11. Prior to that time, the program was supported with County general fund dollars as well as other funding sources including fees generated by the program. Since DHHS has been the agency responsible for the program, the registration fees generated by the program have gone directly into the County's General Fund. OMB staff has reported that the County has not budgeted for the FY12 revenues that will be generated by the program and is currently looking into whether the FY11 revenues generated by the program have been used.

The following chart provides information on sponsoring agency, program budget, fees generated, and families and children supported for the PRC program for the last four fiscal years.

* DHHS staff has indicated that the Millian Memorial United Methodist Church has been interested in putting the space used for the Parent Resource Center to some other use.

	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Sponsoring Agency	HOC	HOC	DHHS	DHHS
Program Budget	\$104,000 [†]	\$105,680	\$103,370	\$48,120
County General Fund PRC Allocation	\$73,160	\$48,160	\$48,120	\$48,120
Fees generated	\$24,430	\$31,780	\$18,000	\$7,000 to date
Fees used to support program?	Yes	Yes	No	No
# Families/children served	305/445	279/404	329/511	59/96 to date

Council staff understands that the reduction in registration fees collected by the program in FY11 is attributable to a couple of factors: (1) a significant increase in the number of ESOL and low-income parents participating in the program and (2) the use of Infants and Toddlers ARRA funds as a partial funding source -- those children participating in conjunction with the Infants and Toddlers program did not pay a fee. It is not clear whether registration fees will be collected from Infants and Toddler program participants in FY12 since Infants and Toddlers ARRA funding is no longer supporting the program.

Council staff notes that program funding has dropped precipitously by about 54% between FY11 and FY12 because supplemental funding previously provided by DHHS is not available. The existence of this supplemental funding in FY11 obviated the need to make use of fees generated by the program. Now, however, **the use of program fees, e.g., what the program is anticipated to collect in FY12 (\$18,000) or what the program has collected in FY11 and FY12 to date (\$25,00), would significantly increase the program's budget by 37% to 52%.**

DISCUSSION ISSUES

Because the PRC operating budget under HOC took into account the fees collected by the program, it may have been Council's intent when transferring the program to County government that the fees generated by the program be used to support program services. If the Council wants to ensure that FY12 operating budget support for the PRCs takes into account fees generated by the program, it could initiate and approve a special appropriation to increase program funding by an approximation of the program fees to be collected in FY12, e.g., \$18,000 based on the previous year's collection, or the total amount in fees collected by the program to date (\$25,000) if the FY11 funds have not been used.

Council staff believes that using the additional funding to expand hours or otherwise provide services that have been reduced at existing sites would be appropriate. However, Council staff cautions against using the funds to restore services at an **additional** site as it is unclear whether the level of funding needed to operate an additional site can be maintained through the FY13 budgeting process.

If the Committee is interested in recommending that the Council make a special appropriation, Council staff will draft a resolution for introduction at Council.

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[†] This is an approximate figure as reported by HOC staff.

Yao, Vivian

From: Barnes, JoAnn
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2011 10:52 AM
To: Yao, Vivian
Cc: Brennan, Patricia; Garvey, Kate; Ahluwalia, Uma
Subject: Requested PRC data

Vivian:

The information that you requested is below. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call or send an email..

FY 11

Total Revenue as of June 30, 2011- **\$18,000**

Total number of families and children served as of June 30, 2011 – **329** families; **511** children

FY 12

Total Revenue as of October 14, 2011 - **\$7,070**

Total number of families and children served as of September 30, 2011 – **59** families **96** children

The current hours of operation and site locations:

332 West Edmondson Drive, Rockville, MD 20850 – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10am to 1:30pm

8107 Morningview Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10am to 1:30pm

2450 Lyttonsville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910 – Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 10am to 1:30 pm

Program Description

The Parent Resource Centers offer information, support and resources that help families serve as nurturers, teachers and role models for their children. They also provide guidance for individual parent concerns and to strengthen community connections that help families support one another and work together for children. They provide information about child development, reasonable expectations and developmentally appropriate activities that enhance the learning of young children. They assist families with parenting, family life and developmental issues. They support parents as the primary teachers of their children. They provide positive learning experiences that help children start school ready to learn and promote early parental involvement in education. They make referrals to enable early interventions for special needs. They also offer families opportunities to share ideas, support one another and problem solve parenting concerns.

In FY12, the number of sites was reduced from four to three. The total hours at each site was also reduced, but the type of service to the families has remained consistent. Additionally, we have reduced the level of supervision and administrative support for these sites within the current budget. A grant request has been submitted to MSDE that could provide additional training and possibly increased hours through a partnership with the Infants and Toddlers Program.

Additional Request

We do **collect** information on the income levels of families served; it is being entered into the program database. This is not a standard report and we currently do not have the expertise to develop an ad hoc report. We will continue to pursue this, but could not get the data at this time.

JoAnn K. Barnes
Deputy Chief, CYF
Montgomery County Department of
Health and Human Services
Phone 240-777-3850

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Delgado, Annette**From:** Ervin's Office, Councilmember**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 10:57 AM

063370

To: Montgomery County Council**Subject:** FW: Parent Resource Centers - need to retain membership fees - Family Services Agency/HHS

-----Original Message-----

From: slakefpe@aol.com [mailto:slakefpe@aol.com]**Sent:** Sunday, June 05, 2011 10:14 AM**To:** Ervin's Office, Councilmember**Cc:** maryfcj@aol.com; ecarrizosa@verizon.net; Vze4nnk@verizon.net**Subject:** Parent Resource Centers - need to retain membership fees - Family Services Agency/HHS

Hello Valerie,

Thanks for the inclusion and your continued support of the Parent Resource Centers in this year's budget. I do want to tell you that the \$48,000 is however insufficient. If PRCs are not able to make up the difference between this allocation and the \$120,000 necessary to cover the operation of the 4 centers, they will not be able to open this fall. There is some talk of opening fewer days in each of the centers as opposed to the alternative, which is opening only two centers and therefore result in the closure of all 4 centers this Fall.

The problem is this: Perception is that PRCs are free to the public. They are not, membership dues supplement their budget. It is perceived that the necessary budget is \$48,000 because prior to cutting the PRCs from their budget entirely, HOC recommended this figure to the County Executive as a "last best offer." They had decided in FY '2010 that PRCs were not essential to their mission and offered less than flat budgeting for the program, hoping someone else would pick up the slack. When I testified in support of the Centers, I mentioned the \$40,000 in membership fees that were collected that year. When the PRC was shifted to HHS and subsequently, Family Services, they lost the ability to collect these membership fees at all. Now, the sum total of membership fees (reduced because Family Services offers a no-cost membership to their participating families in the Infants and Toddlers program, a loss of approximately \$20,000 annually).

What I am asking you today, is if you are in any way able to sheppard the PRCs through the process of retaining the membership fees. We think that Family Services Agency may have the capacity to designate an account for their use. They had one under HOC, but really cannot function without the supplement of nearly \$40,000 in annual membership fees.

Valerie, we know that you understand how vital the Centers are the County parents and children. We hope that you can be a part of finding a home for the centers that will allow them to remain in service to the community. Now that the budget battle is concluded, and we thank you for your help, we may need some assistance in locating the suitable department that will allow centers to retain the membership fees that help them to function.

Call on us if you need more information, or would like to come and visit the centers during the interim.

Sincerely,
Sylvia Lake

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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6/6/2011

Marin, Sandra

From: Ervin's Office, Councilmember
Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2011 9:27 AM
To: Montgomery County Council
Subject: FW: Parent Resource Centers

063913

-----Original Message-----

From: Stephanie Jones [mailto:stephaniemarxjones@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2011 9:26 AM
To: Ervin's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Parent Resource Centers

Dear Ms Ervin, I have been a parent educator in the Parent Resource Centers (PRC) since October 1978. In those 33 years, the program has expanded and contracted due to changes in budget and administration by MCPS, HOC and now HHS. The demographics of the families served have changed dramatically. Thousands of families have benefited from the education and support they have received in the centers. Unfortunately, many families may no longer receive those benefits due to the severe cuts in our budget.

Recent discussions about funding for the PRC suggest that parents may have to begin to pay to use the program. Parents have been paying to use the program since the mid-1980s, first as donations and later as a flat fee. Now parents pay a sliding scale fee of \$35 to \$400 per year based on family income. This past year the parent fees generated approximately \$18,000 in income. The fees were deposited into Montgomery County's general account. The Parent Resource Centers have no access to these funds.

The parent portion of the program paid for approximately 40% of the costs for the PRC. In the transition from HOC to HHS, the HOC portion (reduced over time from \$75,000 to \$48,000) was assumed to be the entire cost for the program when it is not. To keep the PRC running, the County Council must also assign the income generated by the parents' fees back to the Center.

I am appealing to you as a member of the County Council to make this happen. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide more details. You can reach me by email or phone (301 565-2045). Thank you for your attention.

Stephanie Jones

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7/12/2011

Marin, Sandra

From: GEORGIA LEWIS [georgiadlewis@verizon.net]
Sent: Saturday, July 30, 2011 4:25 PM
To: Montgomery County Council
Subject: Re: Parent Resource Centers

064254



Thank you for your quick reply! I do understand that budget cuts were necessary and you had to set priorities. I just wanted to be sure you knew that the PRCs do collect user fees and that those fees cover a substantial amount of their cost, making the budget figure misleading.

Would there be a mechanism for the parents who use the centers and other interested donors to write a small, optional separate check (say \$5 or \$10 per family) to go into a fund for supplies (paper, paint, books, toy replacement, etc.)? The bare-bones budget does not provide for anything but salaries and as you know, early childhood activities require supplies and educational toys.

The centers are unique in their support of early childhood and parent education. They are one of many services that make Montgomery County special. Perhaps you could problem-solve with their staff and/or the families who use them to come up with other ways to more adequately fund them and ensure their survival.

Sincerely,
Georgia Lewis

From: Montgomery County Council <County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov>
To: georgiadlewis@verizon.net
Sent: Tue, July 26, 2011 8:43:50 AM
Subject: Parent Resource Centers

Dear Ms. Lewis:

Thank you for your correspondence to the Council sharing your support for the Parent Resource Centers (PRCs). The Council understands that the PRCs have been important to many people and have provided caregivers with a place to learn about and support young children. I shared your comments with my Council colleagues, and I am pleased to respond on their behalf.

For Fiscal Year 2012, which began on July 1, County Executive Ike Leggett proposed, and the Council approved, the same amount of funding for the PRCs as was provided in the prior fiscal year (FY11). The Council understood that this level of funding would not likely allow the continuation of all PRCs operating in FY11, because supplemental funding that the Department of Health and Human Services was able to redirect to support the centers in FY11 would not be available. Information related to the collection and disposition of user fees was provided to the Council as part of its budget review.

FY12 is an extraordinary budget year. We have had to close an estimated \$300 million budget gap, and we have asked everyone to share in the solutions. County employees have not received cost of living adjustments or step increases and will be paying more for group benefits, including health insurance. There have been significant cuts to all programs, and unfortunately, we do not have enough money to help everyone in need in our County.

I appreciate you taking the time to share your comments with us. Your views are important and help the Council in its deliberations on matters that affect the residents of Montgomery County.

Sincerely,

Valerie Ervin
Council President

8/1/2011

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